

## Deep Light

**Dennis Martineau**

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*Set in space, Deep Light is a methodical science fiction novel in which a black hole experiment forces people to confront unspeakable horrors.*

In Dennis Martineau's science fiction novel *Deep Light*, a space station dedicated to the study of black holes opens a portal to a hellish realm.

The Parallax Space Station is the pet project of Commander Ian Philips, who was given a near-infinite budget and resources. Ian also designs Deep Light to produce controlled black holes in the hopes of studying them. But in the hours before the official launch of Deep Light, members of the ICEE—a multinational organization that oversees many of humanity's forays into space—begin disappearing from the space station. Their bodies are discovered, having been torn apart. There's no indication of life on board the space station aside from the ICEE members, but systems begin to shut down. Then, Deep Light powers on and produces a phenomenon believed to be impossible: a white hole.

Amid the horrors unleashed on Parallax is a very human threat: the ICEE wants to wrest control of the project from Ian and has seeded it with double agents. Throughout the story, there remain two clear dangers: the ICEE agents tasked with overthrowing Ian, and whatever Deep Light has unleashed. The innocent members of the team fight for survival against unspeakable horrors, but also against their so-called teammates, making the already tense situation even more dire.

Most of the members of the team are underdeveloped. The book leans into using their entire names and reciting their ranks to distinguish between them. Only Ian and John are fleshed out sufficiently—Ian as someone who despises ICEE but uses their money and resources in pursuit of his life's work; he also cares about those serving under him and hopes to expand human knowledge. John is at his opposite—an intriguing orphan who was raised by ICEE but has grown distrustful of the organization and its orders.

Moving from its explosive prologue into details of John's arrival on Parallax as Ian works to understand what killed his teammates, the novel's sense of slow dread builds. Red herrings are introduced, such as hints that the victims were poisoned and might have hallucinated, putting their words into doubt. But as the book drags on, with Ian crawling toward a plan of action, interest wanes. At the book's end, the truth behind Deep Light and ICEE is still vague.

Teasing a sequel, *Deep Light* is a methodical science fiction novel in which a black hole experiment forces people to confront unspeakable horrors.

JOHN M. MURRAY (May 1, 2023)

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